GRANTEE ABSTRACT

Michigan

MICHIGAN IS CURRENTLY IMPLEMENTING AN ambitious, comprehensive early learning and development plan known as *Great Start, Great Investment, Great Future: The Plan for Early Learning and Development in Michigan* (see *http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/ 1_Great_Start_-_Great_Investment_-_Great_Future_- _FINAL_422080_7.PDF)*. Through its RTT-ELC grant work, the state will accomplish the following goals:

1. Increase access among children with high needs to high-quality early learning programs through improving the quality of existing programs.

2. Increase opportunities for licensed and unlicensed home-based providers to improve the quality of their programs.

3. Ensure that many more parents understand and are meaningfully engaged in their children's early learning and development.

4. Involve many more families and providers in efforts to identify and promote children's physical, social, and emotional health.

5. Expand education and professional development opportunities, especially for home-based providers.

6. Build an early learning data system that provides information (anonymously and in aggregate) on children across departments and programs and allows the state to assess programs' value to parents and children.

In terms of Michigan's tiered quality rating and improvement system (TQRIS), known as Great Start to Quality (GSQ), the state plans to achieve the following goals:

- Target outreach to home-based early learning and development programs in the highest need

communities, including Pathways to Potential communities, and encourage and support participation in GSQ.

- Target the highest needs communities, including Pathways to Potential communities, to provide scholarship opportunities for high need infants and toddlers.

- Support unlicensed early learning providers in Pathways to Potential communities to improve their program quality and support progress toward licensure.

- Strengthen participation in Great Start to Quality with (a) financial incentives to licensed and registered programs for completing a self-assessment and developing a quality improvement plan, as well as to unlicensed subsidized providers who reach tier 3, and (b) quality improvement grants.

- Increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the existing licensing system by developing key indicators, maximizing the current data sharing between licensing and GSQ, and supporting consultants to monitor licensing compliance and help programs improve quality.

Michigan addressed the following Focused Investment Areas in its application:

Health Promotion

(C)(3) Identifying and addressing the health, behavioral health, and developmental needs of children with high needs to improve school readiness. Michigan plans to capitalize on efforts already under way in the state to increase healthy behaviors through education and personal action. The state will

- conduct a gap analysis of GSQ program standards, including health, family engagement, and social-emotional health;

- review and incorporate protective factors into the GSQ program standards;

- pilot the use of child care health consultants (CCHCs), family engagement consultants, and social-emotional health consultants to support providers;

- use CCHCs to support home-based providers in promoting screening, referral, and well-child care;

- train home-based providers to promote healthy eating habits, nutrition, and physical activity;

- develop training modules on family and community partnerships;

- support families and providers in the use of protective factors;

- provide grant funding to disseminate information about early childhood development;

- evaluate the pilot of child care health consultants (CCHCs), family engagement consultants, and social-emotional health consultants.

Family Engagement

(C)(4) Engaging and supporting families. The second recommendation in *Great Start, Great Investment, Great Future* is "Support families' critical role in their children's early learning and development." The state will

- ensure that GSQ standards for family and community partnerships engagement reflect the Strengthening Families™ Protective Factors (SFPF) framework;

- enhance the quality improvement capacity of GSQ through the addition of specialized quality improvement consultants (QICs) involved in family engagement;

- use specialized quality improvement consultation to measurably improve the capacity of home-based providers to engage families in their children's learning;

- ensure that families have information and resources that support their engagement in children's learning and development;

- engage Great Start Parent Coalitions to strengthen their community of trusted advisors to improve linkages to the families most difficult to engage in early learning and development programs and related community supports.

Support Workforce Improvement

(D)(2) Supporting Early Childhood Educators in improving their knowledge, skills, and abilities. The state has developed five strategies to move toward its overarching goal of having effective early childhood educator support in place for all children with high needs by 2020. These strategies are to

1. support the expansion of online training for the child development associate (CDA) credential;

2. increase the number of community college early childhood programs that are accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC);

3. expand the T.E.A.C.H. scholarship offerings to support increased staff qualifications and increased program quality;

4. offer business training to help early childhood educators in three regions improve their business and operational plans.

Kindergarten Entry Assessment

(E)(1) Understanding the status of children's learning and development at kindergarten entry. Currently, nearly 200 kindergarten teachers across the state are piloting the assessment Teaching Strategies GOLD Online®, and in 2015 the assessment will be available statewide. The state will use RTT-ELC funding to support family engagement in the assessment process. Michigan plans to develop both print and online materials for families, and accompanying tips for early childhood educators to help them support prekindergarten families in the transition to kindergarten, including how to understand and utilize the results and reports from the kindergarten entry assessment.

Build or Enhance Data Systems

(E)(2) Building or enhancing an early learning data system to improve instruction, practices, services, and policies. Michigan will bring all early learning data for publicly funded early learning programs within the Michigan Statewide Longitudinal Data System (MSLDS), beginning with unique identification code (UIC) assignment, program participation, star quality of programs, and improved demographic reporting. This will enable the state to more efficiently analyze the quality of care and education being provided for our earliest learners and ensure that program goals are being met. Michigan will then expand our public reporting system to ensure that these more robust data are available not only to policy makers, but also to families, educators, researchers, and others needing access to data to support early learning improvements.

Michigan has 374,854 children, birth to kindergarten entry, from low-income families. The state reports that it is leveraging $500,000 in other funding sources to support this effort.